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THE

MONASTIC HOUSES OF ENGLAND

THEIR

ACCUSERS AND DEFENDERS.

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THE

MONASTIC HOUSES OF ENGLAND;

THEIR

ACCUSERS AND DEFENDERS.

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO

THE MOST NOBLE THE DUKE OF NORFOLK,

EARL MARSHAL OF ENGLAND,

ETC. ETC.

BY S. H. B.

LONDON:
THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON;
DUBLIN; AND DERBY.
MDCCCLXIX.

110. k. 453.

PREFACE.

The following pages may appear abrupt in the commencement; but whilst this can be accounted for by the fact that they have been removed from a more expansive production upon the most important epoch in English history, the materials for which have been growing upon the writer's hands by daily discoveries, it is to be hoped that the present work will at least vindicate its unpretentious title. No impartial reader will perceive any statement made without fair evidence: in fact, if the author may be allowed so to say, there is a philosophic impartiality in using his quotations, except where the now too well known worthlessness of these authorities, as members of the great human family, enforces the

question of the relative credibility of their writings. One great distinctive feature of the book is that none but Protestant authorities are adduced to prove what may be deemed a Catholic postulate; a result, however, which would be inevitable in the hands of any conscientious examiner of the testimonies quoted in this volume.

It was a true and, considering its author, a liberal saying, that the history of England yet remains to be written. But who can do it? A number of consentaneous spirits, bound to strict impartiality, and using the abundant material of the present and hereafter, might accomplish that great national undertaking — no single man ever. We have, to be sure, unwieldy and egotistical treatises, in which a man seems to think he is writing history, whilst he dogmatises; or relating facts when he is merely recording his own opinions. Such "histories" have we had within the last few years—a page or two of facts in a dozen tomes of arrogant declamation.

Every day is disentombing new evidences of misrepresentation or misconception in the narratives hitherto accepted as English history by the mass of the writers and the people of Great Britain. No epoch has been more misconceived or falsified than that of the Reformation—and no phase of that event more so than the spoliation of the monasteries. To an elucidation of some of the occurrences of that time the compiler of the following pages has directed much attention; and, having laid before him the somewhat quaint notion that he would only use Protestant authorities to prove the wrong and injustice inflicted on the monastic institutions, he has adhered firmly to his intention, and now respectfully leaves the candid reader to judge if the verdict of an entirely Protestant jury is not in favour of the moral and benevolent character of the monasteries and nunneries of old Catholic England.

London, July, 1869.

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THE MONASTIC HOUSES OF ENGLAND, THEIR ACCUSERS AND DEFENDERS.

CHAPTER I.

LORD CROMWELL'S REPORT ON THE MONASTIC HOUSES.

It should not be forgotten that, for all the condemnation cast upon the monastic institutions, most historians have no better basis than the report of Thomas Cromwell. The least that can be said is, that writers seeking credence should have searched a purer source for fact. Cromwell was employed to provide a cause for confiscation, although he might have met the foregone conclusions of his master without supplying reasons to satisfy what was called "public conscience." Doubtless, irregularities prevailed in many of those institutions; but it surely was no improvement to break up establishments which acknowledgedly shared their substance with the poor, to confer their revenues upon the worthless nobles and minions of Henry. In the name of common sense, Thomas Cromwell must be a *testis damnosus* for evermore, on a matter like this. It is a rather singular fact, that posterity, which has been so "horrified" at Cromwell's "report," has never seen that document, because the original printed copies were collected and destroyed before King Henry's death; it is supposed, says Henry Griffin, by

Dr. Heath, at the suggestion of King Henry himself. No less than six different versions of the "report" are still extant, all professing to be the original, and all differing in most important details. One of these specimens was printed in Germany, under the inspection of John Poynet,* a circumstance sufficient to attach more than suspicion to the truth of the production, owing to the evil character of its originator or supervisor. Another edition was printed in London by Edward Whitechurch, "revised" by Bale† and Coverdale, a fact which imparts still graver suspicion to the truth of that document. These productions have been long out of print, and copies are extremely scarce; nevertheless, alleged extracts from them have been published in various books. Burnet says he only saw a few leaves of the "original report;" but the remnants he saw, if he can be trusted even so far with having ground upon which to base an assertion, were most probably a portion of a rough copy made by Sir Piers Dutton, which, on his death-bed, he stated to be "most untrue in many particulars."

The MS. in question was in possession of Lord Falkland in the reign of Charles the First, and has been alluded to in a letter of Archbishop Laud. Burnet might possibly have seen this. But the historian has at hand, supplementing all previous

* This "Reformed" prelate was called to penance, and fined at Paul's Cross for taking away, and cohabiting with, the wife of a Nottingham butcher.

† See Maitland's Paper on Bishop Bale, in his "Essays on the Reformation;" Wharton on the character of Bale; also the Parker and Camden Society's papers," on the general merits of this deposed prelate.

proof, the irrefragable voucher of the "State Papers," which Mr. Brewer has so ably presented as an important aid to the truthful understanding of the question. This publication fully manifests that "the monks were by no means so corrupt as party spirit afterwards represented them; although the absence of any ostensible employment certainly lowered them in the estimation of the laity." But what courses of industry were open in those times? There were wars, commerce, tillage. In unlettered days the monks engaged themselves in clerkly works; they preserved the learned labours of the ancients, and copied their writings; they tilled, or overlooked the tillage of their lands, of whose fruits they made no niggard bestowal upon the poor. Dr. Heylin, an unimpeachable Protestant authority—for to Protestant authority alone is this evidence confined—writing in the time of Charles II., bears testimony to the usefulness, in deeds of charity at least, of the dwellers in monasteries, who, when they acted in the spirit of their founders, were fair stewards of the Originator of Christianity. The reproduction here of the statements of Bishop Tanner, who wrote in the time of George the Second, would be perused with incredulity, for the strength of such testimony in favour of the English monastic institutions seems almost too potent for belief. Yet he is obviously sincere. His reference to the Abbacy of St. Albans is especially noteworthy. Hume, on the other hand, charges the monks with "supine idleness," "profound ignorance," the "propagation of pious frauds," "immorality," "selfishness," &c. Individually, these charges may all be true, for, with-

out using the threadbare analogy of there being a Judas among the apostles, no institution has been, or is, without its offending members. But it has not yet appeared that the spoliation of England's monasteries has bettered the position of the humble life of England, the main object of interest to the philanthropist. Mallet says: "The monks, softened by their instructions the ferocious manners of the people, and opposed their credit to the tyranny of the nobility, who knew no other occupation than war, and grievously oppressed their neighbours. On this account the government of monks was preferred to theirs. The people sought them for judges. It was a usual saying, that it was better to be governed by the bishop's crosier than the monarch's sceptre."

Wharton, who is described as "a bitter enemy of Popery," observes: "The monks of Casseus were distinguished, not only for their knowledge of sciences, but their attention to polite learning, and an acquaintance with the classics. Their learned abbot, Desiderius, collected the best Greek and Roman authors. The fraternity not only composed learned treatises on music, logic, astronomy, and Vitruvian architecture, but likewise employed a portion of their time in transcribing Tacitus, &c. This laudable example was, in the 11th and 12th centuries, followed with great spirit and emulation by many English monasteries."

Sharon Turner, by no means chary in denunciation of the elder creed and its ministers, admits that "in no point did personal interest and public welfare more cordially unite than in the encouragement of monasteries."

With the characteristic generosity of a superior mind, a distinguished writer in the *Quarterly Review*, dated December, 1811, eschews the nonsense about monks being enemies of learning, and hiding the "Word" from the people—who, by the way, could not read said "word" for lack of even rudest typography, being all written by fingers seldom forgiven their other toil—refers with honest pride to those oases in the desert of intellect presented by Malmesbury, Lindisfarne, and Jarrow. Amongst his remarks he states: "In those days the Church offered the only asylum from the evils to which every country was exposed. Amidst continual wars the Church enjoyed peace; it was regarded as a sacred realm by men who, though they hated one another, believed and feared the same God. Abused as it was by the worldly-minded and ambitious, and disgraced by the artifices of the designing, and the follies of the fanatic, it afforded a shelter to those who were better than the world in their youth, or weary of it in their age. The wise as well as the timid and gentle fled to this Goshen of God, which enjoyed its own light and calm, amidst darkness and storms."

When Henry the Eighth was dividing the property of the monasteries—the heirloom of the poor of England—amongst his favourite servitors, he felt he was infringing on the heritage of the necessitous, and made the best acknowledgment the cravings of his imperious sensuality permitted. His grants almost invariably contained the proviso: "That the grantees should continue the like hospitality and alms to the indigent

travellers and poor:" "which," writes a commentator in 1827, "had usually and constantly been afforded to them by the religious before their houses were suppressed."

Fortescue, Lord Chief Justice of England, in the time of Henry VI., in his letters to Prince Edward (the youthful victim of Tewkesbury), drew a striking parallel between the condition of the French and English peasant in his time—the period of monasteries. Notwithstanding the wars of the Roses, which had robbed this fair old land of so many myriads of her best and bravest, the writer of "De Laudibus Legum Angliæ" remarks: "Every inhabitant is at his liberty fully to use and enjoy whatever his farm produceth, the fruits of the earth, the increase of his flock, and the like; all the improvement he makes, whether by his own proper industry, or of those he retains in his service, are his own, to use and to enjoy, without the let, interruption, or denial of any. If he be in any wise injured or oppressed, he shall have his amends and satisfactions against the party offending. Hence it is that the inhabitants are rich in gold, silver, and in all the necessaries and conveniences of life. They drink no water, unless at certain times, upon a religious score, and by way of doing penance. They are fed, in great abundance, with all sorts of flesh and fish, of which they have plenty everywhere; they are clothed throughout in good woollens; their bedding and other furniture in their houses are of wool, and that in great store. They are also well provided with all sorts of household goods and necessary implements for husbandry.

Every one, according to his rank, hath all things which conduce to make life easy and happy."

Whatever abuses did exist in the monasteries before Cromwell's inquisition were not ignored by the legislature, episcopacy, higher members of the clergy, and nobility. On the 30th July, 1530, a document was drawn up by Parliament, addressed to the Pope, on the "misconduct of the clergy, and the abuses of the Church." This "petition" to His Holiness was signed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, four bishops, twenty-two abbots, two dukes, two marquises, thirteen earls, twenty-five barons, and eleven knights. (See Parry's "Parliaments of England.") This inquiry was thrown aside for ever by the revolutionary movements of Cromwell, hastened by the rapacity of the king. The Rev. Launcelot Pomeroy, who was a constant enemy to the Church of Rome, states "that the fact of twenty-two abbots demanding an investigation into the character of those over whom they presided is a strong argument in favour of their innocence. It is almost impossible (he continues) that men of such high character and severe discipline could have been privy to the crimes attributed to the monastic houses. However we may abhor Popery, we must give the monks and nuns credit for the virtues which they really possessed, and above all, their charity and kindness to the poor and the fallen."

Philip De Comines, perhaps the most enlightened observer of his day, who had visited the richest countries of continental Europe, and carefully noted their condition, declared England—in the time of the monasteries, too—to be the best

governed kingdom he had seen. Even amidst the carnage and confusion of the Wars of the Roses the state of the people of England was far better than that of the most fortunate subjects of the paternal despotisms or oligarchies beyond the sea. De Comines regarded the grand old constitution of our ancestors as a "just and holy thing" —protecting the people and strengthening the monarch who respected it. Another fact which De Comines mentions redounds greatly to the manly forbearance of Englishmen. In the Wars of the Roses the track of battle was not lighted by the fires of burning cities, nor marked by the ruins of ravaged monasteries; the contest seemed to be confined to the men engaged, the people and the nobles; and although the latter were nearly all cut off, their properties unspoiled supplied the means of comfort to the retainers and tenants of their heirs. It is said that "there is no enemy so terrible as the man of genius," and indeed it may be added, no so valuable a friend. Philip De Comines landed at Dover with strong Gallic prejudices against England and its people. He returned from its shores with an ardent admiration of most he had witnessed; the hospitality of the clergy and monks to strangers, and their consideration for literature and men of letters; the frank generosity and manly kindness of the people; and, above all, the virtue and beauty of the women, their innocence, and their unaffected truth.

"It must be confessed," writes Dr. Collier, "there were several shocking circumstances in the reign of Henry the Eighth and his children. To see churches pulled down or rifled, the plate

swept off the altar, and holy furniture converted to common uses, has no great air of devotion. To see the choir undressed to make the drawing-room and bed-chamber fine, was not very primitive at first view. The forced surrender of abbeys, the maiming of bishoprics, &c., are apt to puzzle the vulgar capacity. But unless a man's understanding is more than ordinarily improved, he will be at a loss to reconcile these measures with Christian maxims, and make them fall in with conscience and Reformation."—(Ecclesiastical History, part ii., p. 163.) This Protestant divine refers to the scenes of 1561, when Elizabeth was scarcely three years on the throne. "To behold noble structures, consecrated to the honour of the ever Blessed Trinity, where all the articles of the Apostles' Creed were professed, ravaged and razed, the furniture made plunder, and the church estate seized, gives a frightful idea of some of the Reformers."—(Ibid., part ii., p. 471.)

Even Burnet admits that some "base arts" were used to fill up the "Black Book" with the crimes of religious persons. Dugdale declares that "many of the religious houses, condemned for crime, at the very same time stood high for morality, piety, and charity." It is an important fact that in the "first visitation" of the monastic houses, it was said that "crime and immorality were only to be found in the lesser monasteries, that all attempts to reform them were in vain, that the inmates should be sent to the larger houses, where they may be compelled to live religiously." The report then describes the larger monasteries thus: "wherein, thanks be to God,

religion is well kept and observed."* This opinion was endorsed by the king and both houses of Parliament; but a very short period elapsed when both houses held the contrary and more convenient opinion. The amount of property seized and confiscated by the first visitation increased the desire for a second. The agents were "judiciously selected," and they proceeded to educe that "Black Book" which Dr. Burnet would have posterity to accept as a statement of facts. Burnet produces a letter of Cranmer to King Henry concerning "certain men seizing the best of the Church lands under the pretence that it was the command of his Highness." The learned Collier remarks: "This letter, among other proofs, shows the disposition of too many people, and what scrambling there was for the Church estates, and how much the loaves of the Reformation were valued above the doctrine."—(Collier's Ecclesiastical History, vol. v. p. 158.) Hume (vol. iv. p. 180) is a later authority for those who have, in historical matters, adopted Burnet. Hume had the advantage of having at hand the well-preserved tomes of his episcopal compatriot, yet he comes out from his researches and states: "The income of the monastic establishments confiscated amounted to £161,100. The whole revenue of England arising from lands and other revenues had been rated at the period of the Reformation at four millions per annum, so that the revenue of the monks did not exceed a twentieth part of the national income. Probably the reve-

* See Collier, part ii. p. 113-14.

nues of the clergy at this day (1768, when Hume wrote) are a larger proportion of the industry of the community. It may also be remarked in favour of the Romish clergy that a very considerable proportion of their incomes was expended in hospitality, relieving and assisting the indigent, and in the education of the people." No wonder that poor laws became necessary when the stewards of the poor were thus spoliated. But the saddest confiscation of all is likewise chronicled in Hume —one hundred and ten hospitals, many of them under the charge of religious people, were despoiled. Neither Foxe nor Burnet mentions a fact like this, much less adduces a reason for its commission. Yet in his "History of the Reformation," Burnet makes very startling statements. "The irregular and immoral lives of many of the professors of the Gospel," he observes, "gave their enemies great advantage, to say that they ran away from confession, penance, and prayer, only to be under no restraint, and to indulge themselves in a licentious and dissolute course of life." This opinion of Dr. Burnet is actually that expressed by Martin Bucer, who was himself one of the chief promoters of the "new learning," and one of whose letters to Calvin is an illustration of the state of affairs at that epoch. In this letter he says:—"God has punished us [the Reformers] for the injury we have done to His name by our long and most mischievous hypocrisy." This is candid from the friar husband of four wives, one of whom was a nun, and presented him with thirteen children. Camden and Strype, also, in strong language, proclaim the dishonesty and

immorality which characterised both the Reformed clergy and the laity during the reign of Edward VI. and that of Elizabeth.

Andrea, a German Reformer, laments the excesses of the adherents of the "new learning," and the immorality of the very clergy who undertook to reform religion. "The monasteries," he says, "were dissolved—to stand empty, or to become stalls for cattle. The regularly recurring prayers are abolished, so that now most people pray not at all. The public fasts are laid aside; and now the commands of Jesus Christ are held to be but useless words: not to say anything of blasphemers, adulterers, or extortioners." And again he observes: "He who knows the avarice of the clergy and their unbridled life, will not be astonished that they no longer stand in that respect with the people which were fitting."

The reluctant admissions of such noted authorities as have been here cited, should not fail to have some weight with the most sceptical of the English people.

CHAPTER II.

MR. FROUDE'S OPINION OF THE MONASTIC HOUSES.

In a lecture delivered at Manchester, in the early part of 1867, Mr. Froude, who is in some writings harsh enough upon the ancient creed, bears remarkable testimony to the condition of the country, moral and material, in the age of an

undivided Church, and when monasteries were spread over the face of then "merrie England."

"Never," said Mr. Froude, "in all history, in ancient or modern times, that they knew of, had mankind known out of themselves anything so grand, so useful, so beautiful, as the Catholic Church once was. In these times well regulated selfishness is the recognised rule of action—every one is expected to look out for himself, and to take care of his own interest. At that time the Church ruled the state with the authority of a conscience, and self-interest, as a motive of action, was only named to be abhorred. Wisdom, justice, self-denial, nobleness, purity, high-mindedness—those were the qualities before which the freeborn races of Europe had been contented to bow, and in no order of men were such qualities to be found, as they were found six hundred years ago, in the clergy of the Catholic Church. They called themselves the successors of the Apostles; they claimed in their Master's name universal spiritual authority: but they made good their pretensions by the holiness of their lives. They were allowed to rule because they deserved to rule, and in the fulness of reverence kings and nobles bent before a power which was nearer to God than their own. Over prince and subject, chieftain and serf, a body of unarmed defenceless men reigned supreme by the influence of sanctity." Mr. Froude continued to say that he "did not pretend that the clergy were perfect; they were very far from perfect at the best of times, and the European nations were never completely submissive to them; it would not have been well

if they had been. The business of human creatures in this planet was not summed up in the most excellent of priestly catechisms; the world and its concerns continued to interest men, though priests insisted on their nothingness. They could not prevent kings from quarrelling with each other; they could not hinder disputed successions, and civil feuds, wars, and political conspiracies: what they did do was, to shelter the weak from the strong. In the eyes of the clergy the serf and his lord stood on the level of sinful humanity. Into their ranks high birth was no passport. They were for the most part children of the people; and the son of the artizan and peasant rose to the mitre and the triple crown just as now the rail-splitter and the tailor become presidents of the Republic of the West." With regard to one of the phases of Catholic observance, Mr. Froude has remarked that "the monasteries were another vast feature of the middle ages, when they were inhabited by fraternities of men who desired to devote themselves to goodness, and who, in order the better to do so, took vows of poverty, that they might not be entangled with the pursuit of money, and of chastity that they might not be distracted with the cares of a family. Their days were spent in hard bodily labour, in study, or in visiting the sick; at night they were on the stone floors of their chapels, holding up their withered hands to heaven, interceding for the souls who were suffering in purgatory. The system spread to the farthest limits of Christendom. The religious houses became places of refuge where men of noble birth, kings and

queens, and emperors and warriors, and statesmen, retired to lay down their splendid cares, and end their days in peace. Those with whom the world had dealt hardly, and those whom it had surfeited with its unsatisfying pleasures, those who were disappointed with earth and those who were filled with passionate aspirations after health, alike found a haven of rest in the quiet cloisters."

Does the Protestant Church of to-day realize this picture? A distinguished Anglican Dean says the present Church of England has returned to the golden condition of things which existed six hundred years ago. Where are the proofs of this return—of the flowing back of the pure and undefiled waters to their sacred source? Alas! we see it not in a married clergy, nor greedy prelates, consecrated by political party, or beneficed by family influence. It requires more than human perspicacity to discover the truth of the learned Dean's adventurous statement, which, in charity, may be set down as a laudable and characteristic aspiration.

For a long period Germany, the "Fatherland of Protestantism," has been completely split up in religious opinion, becoming every day more antagonistic to the principles propounded by Luther. Many years ago Southey described that country as "divided between the old religion on the one side, and the new *ir*-religion on the other." The condition of religion in England is no better, although the Anglican clergy are the most educated ecclesiastics in Europe; but, as a body, they have little sympathy with their flocks. There is no "bond of love" between them.

DR. HUGO ON CONVENTS.

It will be seen what Cromwell, (who gainsaid at the hour of death his testimony at one period of his life), what Dr. London, his coadjutor, and the other perquisitors have averred about the religious houses, which the rapacity of Henry and their own cupidity interested them to destroy. Let us hear the dispassionate language of a Protestant clergyman, the Rev. Thomas Hugo, M.A., F.R.S.L., F.S.A., &c., who wrote in 1867, in the light of long-buried facts, and with the warmth of one who, knowing truth, will avow it. He writes of nunneries:

"Such is the history of Canyngton Priory, from the day that the old noble founded the place for his soul's health, through ages of varying fortunes, down to other and far worse times, when, under a hollow pretence of opposing superstition, sacrilegious hands took to themselves this and other houses of God in possession. The scene, indeed, had little of the glories of Taunton or Muchelney, Montacute or Buckland. The income of the houses amounted to little more than one-sixth of that even of the least wealthy of those great communities. But, humble though it was, it did its work among the humanizers of the times. It was a school of graces, and for many ages a centre of all refined and refining influences. The memory of its varied excellencies will suggest to honest and teachable minds the duty of looking justly, and therefore kindly and respectfully, on its efforts.....There human life went on, accom-

panied by much which raised and glorified it almost above humanity. In purity and truth the owners lived, and in faith and patience they laboured, and most happily for us—it is, indeed, one of the encouraging signs of the age—we are again beginning to appreciate the value of such an influence. We are again beginning to think that woman is never greater, never nobler, never lovelier, than when employed in the Great Master's work, and aiding her sisters in the way to heaven. Mediæval times had, in this point of view, an immense advantage over ourselves, which it is short-sighted and unworthy of us to overlook or disparage. Woman then found, in countless instances, that on which she might lavish the fondness of her boundless heart—that which she might love, without weakness, shame, or sin—that on which all her ardent nature might pour itself out in the self-sacrificing devotion and unhesitating affection of which God has so blessedly made her capable. The writer is one who is of opinion, and he fears not to avow it, that the importance of this influence on the world at large cannot be possibly over-rated; and that much whereof we bitterly complain, and which is most disgraceful to us as Christian men, would stand its best, perhaps its only, chance of removal, by such gracious instrumentality. A whole world of devoted aid would thus be given to us, from which, in our pride and conceit we have too long turned away, and, it may be added, have obtained our reward in the misery and degradation of multitudes. With the revival of woman's employment in sacred things, we shall turn over a new leaf in our country's history, and

our eyes will be gladdened with a joy that shall be blighted by no after sorrow, as they rest upon a fairer, a happier, and a holier page."

The above is but one of the many descriptions given by the Rev. Mr. Hugo, in his picturesque and interesting history of the "Mediæval Nunneries of the county of Somerset, and Diocese of Bath and Wells." Mr. Hugo is a beneficed clergyman, a ripe scholar, a disinterested and enlightened witness. Thomas Cromwell and his subordinates were as they have been truly described.

CHAPTER III.

A CONTEMPORARY'S OPINION OF THE DISMANTLEMENT OF RELIGIOUS HOUSES.—THOUGHTFUL SUGGESTION OF EDWARD VI.

Richard Coxe, educated at Oxford, was considered one of the most accomplished scholars of his time. In 1540 he became Archdeacon of Ely, and held also the deanery of Christ Church, in Westminster; and, whilst swearing fealty to the Church of Rome, was secretly attached to Lutheranism, but, like Luther, would not sanction the appropriation of Church property for the benefit of the laity; and, although brought forward in the court by Cranmer, he never practised the deception of his patron. He was detested, of course, by the recipients of the Church property, because he consistently declared that the possessions of the Church were originally intended for, and never

should have been diverted from, "the poor, education, hospitality, the sustaining of a learned and virtuous priesthood, whose sole duty should be the instruction of the people and the reclaiming of the fallen."

In writing to Sir William Paget, Secretary of State to Edward VI., Dr. Coxe observes: "The disposition of colleges, chantries, &c., is now in hand; and ye know (I doubt not) the great lack in this realm of schools, preachers, houses, and livings, for impotent or forlorn widows, who are poor and miserable, and what lack there shall be utterly intolerable, if there be not a sufficient number of priests established in parishes of great circuit and great number. And, howsoever the world beset, let them have living honestly, that beggary drive them not to flattery, superstition, and old idolatry. This I speak to you, not distrusting of the King's Highness's goodness on this behalf, but because there is such a number of importunate wolves that be able to devour colleges, chantries, cathedrals, churches, universities, and their lands, and a thousand times as much. But, for Christ's Passion, try to stay for once 'impropriations.' Our posterity will wonder at us." (R. O. Dom., vol. 84, N. 4, orig.) The Rev. Mr. Stephenson, in his calendar of the State Papers, remarks upon the above passage: "Paget seems to have made light of his friend's remonstrance, and to have thought him troubled with an overscrupulous conscience. The honest expostulations of his old friend must have been less than pleasant to a man who contrived to absorb Church property to the value of nearly twenty thousand pounds a

year." In another letter of "complaint," Dr. Coxe writes to Sir W. Paget: "Our forefathers, who bestowed so plentifully upon their priests and curates, thought little that the greediness of a few should devour their good liberality, contrary to their intent and meaning. Their meaning was, to have a learned, honest, and godly curate, to give them example of life, to administer fruitfully the holy sacraments amongst them, to preach and to teach among them, speedily to make atonements between brawling of neighbours, to keep good hospitality among the parishioners, and to aid and succour the poor as necessity might require..... But impropriations do destroy all for ever. Woe be to the beginners—woe be to the continuers—and woe be to the aiders and abettors!" It was not likely that a prelate, who, however elastic he might be, still had a straitlacedness in his convictions that has since proved notably prophetic, would have been permitted to retain the position of preceptor and almoner to the boy-king. The Seymours and Dudleys would have no men of that kind near the monarch; and Coxe was dismissed for his inconvenient principles. In the Memoirs of Jane Dormer, it is affirmed that Dr. Coxe's notions on lay impropriations were beginning to be shared by his pupil, when Dr. Coxe's dismissal so quickly severed the connection. "As the young king was one day passing the ruins of some monasteries, he enquired what buildings were those? It was answered that they were religious houses, dissolved and demolished by order of the late king, his father, for 'abuses and crime.' He replied, 'Then could not my father punish the

offenders, and suffer so goodly buildings to stand, being so great an ornament to this kingdom, and put in their stead better men that might have governed and inhabited them?" The reverend calendarer of the State Papers observes, that these remarks are an echo of the sentiments of Coxe, which he afterwards more diffusely stated to his friend, Paget.

In November 1575, Dr. Coxe complained bitterly of the persecutions he received from "certain courtiers," and that the queen "joined in the outcry against him." And again, he says: "They look and contend vehemently for a more pure Reformation; but the fact is, that, if the Church lands were once dispersed, their Reformation would soon be at an end."—(Stephenson's State Papers on Elizabeth's reign.) As an instance of the dishonesty and irreligion of public men at this time it may be remarked that Sir William Paget was an ultra-Reformer and persecutor of Catholics in Edward's reign, and in that of Mary he became a Papist; but in no change did he relinquish his hold of the monastic spoils.

In the Rev. Mr. Stephenson's "State Papers," (1558), he produces an extract from the petition of one whom he designates an "earnest reformer," lamenting at a later period the condition of affairs to which Dr. Coxe alludes. In the history of the English dioceses, as well as in that of the struggles of the High and Low Church parties, will be found strong corroborations of the accuracy of the following description: "See now how it that was amiss is amended for all the good pretence. It is amended even as the devil mended his dame's leg,

as it is in the proverb; when he should have set it right he brake it quite in pieces. The monks gave too little alms, and set unable parsons many times in their benefices; but now, where twenty pounds were yearly given to the poor in more than a hundred places in England, is not one meal's meat given. This is a fair amendment. Where they always had one or other vicar that either preached, or hired some to preach, now is there no vicar at all, but the farmer is vicar and parson altogether, and only an old castaway monk or friar that can scarcely say his mattins, is hired for twenty or thirty shillings, meat and drink; yea, in some places, for meat and drink alone, without any wages. I know, and not I alone, but twenty thousand more know, more than five hundred vicarages and parsonages thus well and gospelly served after the new gospel of England." ("The Complaynte of Roderyck Mors, sometyme a Gray Fryre.") The curious little black-letter volume which contains the foregoing is to be found in the British Museum, 1129, B. 3, and bears the names of the publishers, or perhaps republishers, Shepheard and Twyford, (1642), at the sign of the "Bible" in Chancery-lane, and the "Three Daggers" in Fleet-street.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRESENT DEAN OF CHICHESTER AND THE MONASTIC HOUSES.

The most recent writer on the monastic confiscations is Dean Hook, who, in his great work, "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury," whilst steadfastly adhering to what have been called his "speculative theories" as to the antiquity of his own Church, has pronounced an impartial and honourable judgment on the subject of the monastic houses. In fact, he throws a new light upon this long-debated question. "The monasteries suffered in repute," (he observes) "by the very charity they displayed in the civil wars. They received, pitied, and entertained the weary and the wounded among the combatants on either side: when a soldier wanted a meal, he knew where to find it. But this led to much rioting and wantonness. Soldiers without discipline associated with monks, at a time when monastic discipline could not be enforced. The monks were corrupted and the soldiers not reformed."

The right of granting "corrodies," a privilege of nominating a certain number of persons, "younger brothers," or "decayed servants" of the local gentry or nobles, to a "home" in a monastic house subsequently proved disastrous to the reputation of these establishments, because those per-

sons were seldom, if ever, reduced to the discipline of the order. They were in many instances lazy, talentless offshoots of aristocratic families, devoid of education or energy; and the "old servants," too, like most of their class in those days, spent their time in relating stories of the chase, the barbaric festivity of the castle, or the charms of the squire's daughters. Such people should never have become the inmates of a house of religious seclusion. Besides, they were almost unfit for any occupation. When the time came for Lord Cromwell's inquiry, this class of men were artfully returned as "profligate monks," although the commissioners themselves were well aware that those whom they denounced were not bound by vows.

Dean Hook, who enters into details very minutely, states that the table kept at the monasteries was not "always so splendid as that which presents itself to modern imagination." Andrew Ammonius writes to Erasmus, that the monastery in which he boarded kept "a very poor table;" and, again, the Franciscans "live very wretchedly." Thus, it would appear that the pictures we have so often seen of the luxuries of Bolton Abbey in the "monkish days," were nearly a myth. Bolton Abbey, like other religious houses, had a number of boarders, foreigners, scholars, painters, poets, and minstrels. The squires—often needy men—were some seasons for months residing in the local monasteries, and they rarely offered any payment in return; but, on the other hand, have been described as "saucy, covetous, and irreligious." Such men were well suited to play a prominent

part in the approaching revolution in religion and property.

The majority of the monastic houses were in embarrassed circumstances, owing sometimes to the sudden demands of the king for a "subsidy," for which funds should be forthcoming immediately. Those royal requests "were characterized by as little magnanimity as honesty," for at first they were made upon the weakest communities. This system of "subsidy" was long in use, and had been unscrupulously enforced by former monarchs. The "local squires" were always a source of trouble to their monastic neighbours. They were either "borrowing or going to law about this or that manor." These disputes, and the dishonesty of many tenants, reduced a number of religious houses, which were supposed to be wealthy, to actual want. Amongst the numerous accusations against those institutions it has been alleged that they "encouraged laziness and indigence on the part of the lower classes." But, the records of the daily discipline and social arrangements of the Abbeys, still extant, prove those allegations to be utterly groundless. Of course, the "donor's pensioners and other intruders," formed an exception. Industry of every kind was encouraged amongst the tenants and labourers; and never were tenants and labourers more kindly treated or more abundantly fed. Hostile historians, from Fuller down to Macaulay, bear testimony to this fact. The nunneries were, in some respects, better managed, and were a source of relief and protection to thousands of young females who paid nothing for their support, and were

educated in different modes suited to their station in life. There are some interesting MSS. on this subject still extant.

Such was the condition of things when the king, who had achieved his freedom from the bonds of wedded virtue and honour, taking Lord Cromwell as his assistant, contemplated, from a "moral point of view," the reformation of those establishments.

After reviewing the lately discovered papers in the Record Office and other documents "against the monastic houses," Dean Hook remarks that an "advocate on either side might establish his case by attending to one of these series of letters to the exclusion of the other, and this has been too often the case. The series of letters first mentioned, are, in fact, the private reports made from time to time, by the commissioners in the employment of Cromwell. They knew what was expected at their hands, and that they did not deceive the expectations of their employer we infer from certain documents which have lately been discovered in the Record Office. In 1536 a commission was issued to certain country gentlemen, in conjunction with nominees of the court, and they were required to report on the condition of the smaller monasteries. The reports from the three counties of Leicester, Warwick, and Rutland, are the reports which have lately been brought to light. These commissioners enter fully into a detailed statement both of the state of each monastery they visited and of the character sustained by its members, including 'servants and pensioners.' We find that almost all were in

debt, and that in many the houses were ruinous; that in some the inmates were desirous of being secularised; but out of nineteen houses visited there is *only one* in which these country gentlemen, assisted by the nominees of the court, found the existence of any moral delinquency. We ought certainly to take this into account when we consider the subject, and we cannot fail to be suspicious of foul play when we see the commission dropped, and fresh commissioners appointed, of whom we must say that there seems to be no one of a serious and religious turn of mind, whilst charges of immorality were brought against all, and in one case fully established. Although it cannot be proved that Dr. London violated the nuns at Godstowe,* although he was probably not guilty of this offence, yet such a report could be believed of him; and it is certain that he was afterwards obliged to do open penance for an incestuous connexion; that he was convicted of perjury; that he was condemned to ride with his face to the horse's tail at Windsor and at Ockingham. No one was more zealous than he in punishing the suspected monks by turning them adrift into the world, seizing their houses, and confiscating their property. The correspondence of Legh and Layton† bears out the charges brought against them by the 'Pilgrims of Grace' when the

* Dean Hook gives Dr. London the charitable benefit of a "doubt;" but he will find on further inquiry that the case has been established beyond question. Dr. London was Dean of Wallingford.

† When on his death-bed in Brussels Layton was visited by Sir Wm. Paget, who describes him as being in a most desponding condition, and repeatedly expressing his "dread of meeting death."

king was petitioned to prosecute them and the other visitors, or inquisitors, for bribery and extortion and other 'abominable acts.' We are not, however, on this account to reject their reports as entirely untrue; we are induced to attach more weight to the letters in Sir Henry Ellis's Series, which were written by men of higher position in society and of better character, and these letters are generally favourable to the monasteries. We must add that even Cromwell's commissioners made strong appeals in favour of some monasteries and were rebuked by King Henry himself, who accused them of being bribed, when they asked for mercy to be shown to the little monastery of Catesby, against which no accusation could be substantiated." (N. S. vol. 1, p. 78-9; see also Dr. Maitland's "Essays on the Reformation.")

In this review Dr. Hook's testimony is the more to be regarded as he is unfavourable to the principle of religious houses, and states that their suppression is not, at this period, an event to be deplored. He thus describes the result of the disruption and confiscation of the nunneries: "It was with sad and sorrowing hearts that the pious of either sex heard of the demolition of the holy and beautiful house where their fathers had worshipped; and mothers were seen weeping as they received back their unmarried daughters from nunneries which had been to them a happy home. It was with feelings of indignant sympathy that the people of a district saw turned adrift upon the world the holy women who had been to them sisters of charity."

MEMORIALS OF GODSTOW.*—DR. CRANMER.

The nunnery of Godstow was well known for the purity and goodness of its sisterhood. Thomas Cromwell himself sent Matilda Lee, the adopted child of an early friend, to be educated there; and many years subsequently Matilda Lee was the faithful "Popish domestic" of Queen Elizabeth. A near relative of Poynet, Teresa Allen, was one of the most austere amongst the community of Godstow; and enjoyed the friendship of Dr. Cranmer when a Fellow of Cambridge University. Coverdale had relatives in Godstow, of whose chastity and worth he has left a generous and charitable memorial. In a letter to Foxe, still extant, Poynet declares, with candour for which he deserves no thanks, that he did not believe one-tenth part of the "reports made by Lord Cromwell's inquisitors, especially as to the convents;" yet in the report subsequently edited by him on the state of the monastic houses, he put forth the contrary opinion. The documents at present in the Record Office in Cromwell's own handwriting, contain the most conclusive evidence as to the motives of Cromwell and his commissioners. Godstow was represented as "a nest of impurity and abomination" by one of the visitors; another said he had "laid a trap for the young nuns and could not catch them." Piers Dutton observes: "They are so much under the influence

* The author has been kindly favoured with a few extracts from a MS. Chronicle in the possession of a most esteemed Anglican Incumbent of the diocese of Norwich.

of confession and frequent communion that the young men sent to take a list of their property were wholly unable to overcome them, in order to prove that they were amorous ——s." Dr. London, the chief and most infamous of all the commissioners and spies, had recourse to stratagems to make out a case at Godstow, which is but one of the many abominable plans worked out by this profligate priest to attain his employer's ends. A "Hot-Gospeller" of the present day (Ryle), who asserts faith in Cromwell's alleged report and Foxe's accuracy, observes: "I admit that there were religious houses, like Godstow nunnery near Oxford, which had a stainless reputation." Mr. Ryle's statement as to Godstow is at variance with some of the indecent anecdotes of Foxe and his contemporaries. No doubt the many editions issued of Foxe's works have been "carefully improved" by those religious societies who feel a charitable interest in the propagation of such matters. Mr. Ryle, however, is rather unfelicitous in his selection of such authors as Froude and Townshend as the advocates of the "Martyrologist's" truthfulness. Anon the reader will see more of Master Foxe, as the "spirit of truth."

Godstow, like other religious houses, was not forgetful of the necessities of the poor. The milk of three cows was daily distributed amongst the indigent, besides large quantities of bread and meat twice a week; in Lent the sisterhood gave no meat or soup except to the sick or children. Two of the sisterhood were engaged in making up "herbal draughts" and medicines for the ailing. Another sister was engaged in (summer and

spring) culling flowers and making them up in the form of a cross for the sick or dying. These "crosses" were much sought after, especially by persons who had led a bad life, and were on their "death-bed filled with repentance." A number of peasant girls received shoes and warm clothing every winter at Godstow. It has been said that the Sisters of Godstow and other convents were constantly "preaching up celibacy" to maidens in the humbler walks of life; but such was not the fact. Godstow, for instance, gave annually two suits of clothing each and ten shillings to "six peasant brides," who were selected for their pious and virtuous character. On these occasions the interesting ceremonial of the Saxon times was gone through. Every convent and monastery in England, in the olden times, had some peculiarly interesting mode of relieving the necessities of the people, and reclaiming the fallen. The protection afforded by the convents to the peasant maidens was one of the causes which led to English women being so famed for chastity and goodness in those days. In the words of a Venetian traveller, Paul Casenigo, "The English nuns gave instructions to the poorer virgins (peasants) as to their duties when they became wives; to be obedient to their husbands, and to give good example." Henri Ambere, a French architect, who visited England in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII., has left an interesting letter respecting his visit to Godstow: "How he saw the poor children and widows relieved, and treated with such kindness that they must have felt as if the sisterhood were their relatives or kindest

friends. He saw no such nuns in his own country." Cranmer, when a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, writes to the Abbess of Godstow, in these words: "I send you by Stephen Whyte forty shillings, as it be Christmas time, for the comfort of the sickly children of the poor. I beg that my soul's health be remembered in your prayers, and those of the little innocent children. I recommend you to the care and protection of the holy Virgin Mother.—T. C." At this time Cranmer was a poor man, but throughout life he was benevolent.

In another letter to the Abbess of Godstow Dr. Cranmer says: "Stephen Whyte hath told me that you lately gathered around you a number of wild peasant maids, and did make to them a most goodly discourse on the health of their souls; and you sheweth to them how goodly a thing it be for them to go oftentimes to confession. I am mighty glad of your discourse. When the serpent cometh in the shape of man to whisper the thought of a bad action, the maid that goeth to a clean honest confession is the one that cannot be led astray, and so Satan is thereby disappointed. And the man who is dishonest becomes changed; and the spirit of revenge will not any longer have a dwelling in his heart. Confession be a most goodly thing for our soul's health and rest."

As great an enemy to Catholicity as Cranmer subsequently became, has left on record his opinion of the good effects of confession. "Confession," says Voltaire, "is an excellent institution: a check to vice. It is admirably calculated to win over hearts which have been ulcerated by hatred to

forgiveness, and to induce those who have been guilty of injustice to make restitution."

In the thirty-fourth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, Rose Herbert, one of the nuns of Godstow, died in the neighbourhood of Hackney. She was ninety-six years of age, and had been in a state of destitution for the last fifteen years of her life. This venerable lady, it is said, was personally acquainted with Queen Anna Boleyn, Lord Cromwell, and Archbishop Cranmer. About the same period another of the Godstow community, Teresa Whyte, died at St. Alban's, in the eighty-ninth year of her age, in poverty, and nearly paralyzed for want of warm clothing. In Elizabeth's reign the people in many parts of England seem to have lost all sympathy for their old cloistered benefactresses, for those poor ladies became an object of scorn, and the vilest reproaches were cast on them in their declining years; but it could scarcely be otherwise when such men as Parkhurst, Jewell, and Sandys—all prelates of the "new learning"—set an example at once disgraceful and uncharitable to the fanatical and ignorant.

The last of the monks died in the reign of James I., and received his pension up to the period of his death. Eight marks per annum was the sum agreed upon as "compensation" to one or two classes of the monks; but this small sum was withdrawn from the great majority of them at different times, under some pretence of misconduct. The old men were reduced to utter ruin; and many of the most virtuous and useful members of the monastic body—men of science and extensive learning—died from want. The nuns

were treated, if possible, worse, with the exception of a few communities, who received ten marks each. Their own private property, and the fruits of their toil, which they daily shared with the widow and orphan, were seized and confiscated; even the little gold and silver crucifixes—the memorials of friends and relatives—were taken from them; they were expelled from their lawful homes, and in many instances thrown upon the bleak highways; or to wander along the ditches and the hedges, proclaiming by their pale emaciated faces and tattered garments, the fact that humanity, equity, and chivalry were not amongst the virtues of the lay and clerical apostles of the "new learning."

Oldmixon, writing in the spirit of Master Foxe, remarks:—"There was a great lament raised for turning the drones out of their hives, and the demolition of their rude Gothic edifices, which show us that there was as much barbarism in their taste as superstition in their principles." Speed and Burnet's accusations of immorality against the Convents are so abominable that they are unfit for publication now-a-days; whilst Wharton, Dugdale, Wadsworth, Tanner, Carte, and Hearne, —all Protestant writers—proclaim the opposite statements.

It has been contended that the cruelties and injustice practised against the monks and nuns were not the acts of the Reformers, but of Henry the Eighth. But who were the advisers of the dishonest king? Were they not the very men who subsequently participated in the plunder, and then, as they allege, "reformed religion?" Archbishop

Cranmer and his spiritual adviser, Poynet, arranged the new Liturgy;* while such men as Somerset, Warwick, Paget, and Pembroke made a fresh distribution of the monastic property,—amply providing for themselves and their friends. In fact, the Cabinet of Edward VI. were the real organisers of the English Reformation. They commenced by violating their solemn oath to observe the last will and testament of their Sovereign, every article of which they disregarded, and finished by treason to his daughter. Mr. Froude has given a pregnant record of the results of the rule of Edward the Sixth's cabinet, or keepers. "The rebellions and massacres," he says, "the political scandals, the universal suffering throughout the country, during Edward's minority, had created a general bitterness in all classes against the Reformers: the Catholics could appeal with justice to the apparent consequences of heretical opinions; and when the Reforming preachers themselves denounced as loudly the irreligion which had attended their success, there was little wonder that the world took them at their word and was ready to permit the use of strong suppressive measures to keep down the unruly tendencies of uncontrolled fanatics."—Froude's Hist. of England, vol. vi. p. 529. And in another passage Mr. Froude remarks: "The change of faith had brought with it no increase of freedom, and less of charity. The

* A remarkable passage in Mr. Froude's History at once connects the name of Cranmer with the English Liturgy:—"As the translation of the Bible (he says) bears upon it the imprint of the mind of Tyndal, so while the Church of England remains the image of Cranmer will be seen reflected on the calm surface of its Liturgy." —(Vol. v. p. 392.)

prisons were crowded as before with sufferers for opinion; and the creed of a thousand years was made a crime by a doctrine of yesterday."

THE RUIN OF THE MONASTERIES—SACRILEGIOUS CONDUCT OF THE INQUISITORS.

The Dean of Chichester thus describes the result of the ruin and plunder of the monasteries: "Among the younger men some were found who wished to be released from their vows, and to return to the world. Others there were who wept at the thought of leaving the home in which their youth was spent and educated, where they had whiled away their lives, and where they had hoped to repose in old age, until they should be laid in an honoured grave.....It was a sight to melt a heart of flint, and make it weep, to see the old men bidding a long and final farewell to the home of their youth, and if there were among the younger men some who rejoiced in regaining their liberty, yet even they by their countenances showed that if a leader could have been found they would have worked vengeance on their persecutors. As they went out by one door the persons employed to dismantle the abbey, either for the king or those to whom it was granted or held, entered by another."

The noble libraries were destroyed by the "new occupiers;" some were sold to "grocers and soapsellers," and a large quantity was also privately conveyed to the Continental universities. Bale relates that he himself knew of two large libraries

which were sold for forty shillings as "waste paper;" a fact which Fuller describes as "the memorable martyrdom of innocent books." Walter Tyrrell, Henry Fortescue, and Roger Ascham, speak of the vandalism that consigned so many learned MS. books to destruction. "It was," says Piers Dutton, "the especial order of my very good friend, the Lord Cromwell, that every place and thing about the abbeys and convents which had been heretofore called sacred and holy—that is, the chapel, the abode for the holy sacrament, the chalices, and divers other things—were to be used in the same manner as common places of abode or accommodation; and things that were heretofore called holy should now be used as household goods." This order was carried out in the spirit of the infidel and the barbarian. The chapels were made stables, and the wreck of the grand libraries converted into stores for corn or malt. The chalices and other sacred vessels were used for convivial gatherings and wassail toasts; and often turned to purposes unfit for description.

Even Sir James Mackintosh admits that the sympathies of the English people were with the dispossessed and exiled monks. He observes: "The people along the country were most afflicted by the sight of the friars themselves, expelled from their home and their land, often at a very advanced age, and generally after they had been unfitted for bodily toil; all of whom had their outward marks of goodness, and many of whom were doubtless known to the labourers and farmers of the villages only by their prayers and

their alms."—Mackintosh's Hist. Eng., vol. 2, p. 213.

PLOTS TO ENTRAP THE NUNS.—CRANMER AND HIS MONKS.

Let us see Dean Hook's testimony to the Christian mode in which the "Reformers," acting from what they called "moral motives," compassed their designs:—"Lord Cromwell's mode of acting was diabolical," says the Dean, "and our authority for saying so is not Saunders or any Romish partizan, but an honest blunt partizan who would never wilfully deceive, however much he might be deceived himself. Fuller speaks strongly and like a true-hearted Christian when he describes as a 'devilish and damnable act' the system which was adopted for the seduction or corruption of nuns by the very persons who were fiercely denouncing monastic institutions on account of their presumed immorality. Unprincipled young men were sent as visitors to a nunnery; if any of them succeeded in winning the affections of an unsuspecting girl, he sought Cromwell's favour by basely accusing her of incontinence. Of their many repulses no mention was made, though by the confession of one *diabolus* made in after life, we know that, when men had sold themselves to the father of lies, and had sworn allegiance to the accuser of the brethren, innocence itself was no safeguard or protection. The tempter and another young man went to a nunnery within twelve miles of Cambridge. They

represented themselves as brothers, and their dress pointed them out as men of rank. Arriving late at night they were not admitted within the walls of the convent, but were supplied with refreshments in one of the outhouses. Here they found straw sufficient for one night's rest to the travellers, and a supply of food. In the morning they paid their respects to the lady abbess, and tendered their thanks for the cautious hospitality which had been accorded to them. They produced a forged document by which it was made appear that they were appointed visitors of monasteries under a royal commission. To execute their commission, in examining the accounts and taking note of the property, they were for several days partakers of the hospitalities of the house; they resorted to all the arts of fashionable life to corrupt the younger nuns. They entirely failed; but they had the baseness after they had left the house to make report 'that nothing but their weariness bounded their wantonness.' The conscience of one of these wretched beings reproached him in old age, but he made a confession too late to undo the evil of which he had been the cause, or to restore to society and peace of mind the unhappy victims of his calumny.

"Among the falsehoods freely circulated were those which related to the existence of underground passages, leading from friaries to nunneries, for the clandestine convenience of those who hated the light because their deeds were evil. But this application of the sewers, which are found upon examination to have gone no further than the exigencies of drainage required, is now known

to have originated in men who, whatever may have been their zeal against Popery, had forgotten that among deadly sins falsehood is one, and that among Christian virtues the charity which thinketh no evil is the first.

"The charges brought against the larger monasteries will be received with greater caution when the treatment experienced by the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, is brought incidentally under notice.....With the monks of his cathedral Archbishop Cranmer did not live on very friendly terms; and when it was expedient to attack the greater monasteries, against no monks were viler charges brought than against the monks of Canterbury. When under Henry VIII. the Regulars were in their turn displaced, and Seculars were appointed to stalls in the metropolitan church, the prior was to be superseded by a dean to be nominated by the Crown, and the monks by prebendaries to be appointed by the archbishop, the deanery was offered to the calumniated prior, who preferred the acceptance of a large pension, and Archbishop Cranmer selected for the first prebendaries of the new foundation the very monks who had been so foully traduced. It therefore follows that the infamous charges brought against them were, on examination, found to be without foundation; or else that Cranmer was not only more worldly and time-serving than his admirers are prepared to admit, but that he was utterly regardless of religion and morality."

Can any evidence be adduced on this subject more complete than the foregoing result of the

honest and diligent research of an eminent living dignitary of the Church of England?

CHARACTER OF THE SECULAR CLERGY—PURITAN, PAPAL, AND HIGH-CHURCH HISTORIANS CONTRASTED.

Amongst the secular clergy scattered through the country, there were some who imitated the depravity which rendered infamous Dr. London and his associate in the monastic visitation—Richard Layton, Dean of York. This man has been described, by one who knew him well,* as a "hypocrite in religion and a knave in worldly dealings." The Dean of St. Paul's was of the same class, and, like Cranmer, Poynet, Coverdale, Hooper, and Bale, he violated his religious vows, and the presence of a young family rendering further hypocrisy unavoidable, suddenly opened his eyes to the errors of the olden creed, and the "new learning" was conveniently adopted. The motives were patent—the cause inevitable, imperative. In speaking of Œcolampadius, the first German priest who took advantage of that "era of liberty" to indulge in the lay luxury of a handsome young wife, the caustic little Erasmus writes:—"Œcolampadius has taken to himself a wife—a pretty young girl: he wants, I suppose, to mortify himself. Some call Lutheranism a tragedy; but I call it a comedy, where the distress generally ends in a wedding."

That many of the seculars neglected their duties

* The Rev. Herbert Huddlestone, a learned theologian of Cambridge. Huddlestone was a near relative of the Cranmer family; he died in exile at Brussels in Elizabeth's reign.

is a melancholy fact—especially in the preaching of sermons and the instruction of the lower classes; nevertheless, Dean Hook remarks that "Bad as many of them were, we have high testimony to the fact that, as a body, no general charge of immorality could be brought against them." (Vol. i. p. 231.) And, again, he observes: "It is not probable that men whose very existence as a body depended upon their upholding the laws they had vowed to enforce, would be pre-eminent in vice, as Puritan writers affirm."

Dr. Maitland, a living authority, whose trustworthiness and probity are above all question, thus impartially states the case between the writers of the rival parties concerning the Reformation epoch. "It is true enough," says Dr. Maitland, "that each party abused the other, and that many keen, severe, false and malicious things were put forth by the Roman Catholic party; but for senseless cavilling, scurrilous railing, and ribaldry, for the most offensive personalities, for the reckless imputation of the worst motives and most odious vices—in short, for all that was calculated to render an opponent hateful in the eyes of those who were no judges of the matter in dispute, some of the Puritan party went far beyond their adversaries. I do not want to defend the Romish writers, and I hope I have no partiality for them, or for the errors, heresies, and superstitions which they were concerned to maintain; but it really appears to me only simple truth to say that, whether from good or bad motives, they did in fact abstain from that fierce, truculent, and abusive language, that loathsome

ribaldry, which characterised the style of too many of the Puritan writers."

"Time," says Bacon, "is, after all, the great innovator," and, more important still, "time" dispels falsehood, and places before posterity the real motives, the real character, whether for good or evil, of those of whom so-called history has blackened or emblazoned. Dr. Maitland, Mr. Brewer, and Dean Hook, have contributed in this way to enrich the pages of Truth in their researches as to the charges against the monastic houses of England. It is an important sign of the times, that three learned Protestant ecclesiastics should be the men who have brushed away the "literary dust and cobwebs," to which prejudice and falsehood had consigned this question for three hundred years. Their labours constitute a noble tribute to the power of conscience and integrity. Great indeed must be their sense of truth and justice, and greater still their love of charity.

CHAPTER V.

WAS JOHN FOXE A MAN OF TRUTH?

Some modern historians have preferred to rely on Burnet; but where that untrustworthy historian is "out-Foxed," the tomes of the "martyrologist" become the staple of quotation. The "Book of Martyrs" must necessarily be inaccurate, for it was composed and based upon hearsay. The

executions in Mary's reign took place in Foxe's absence from England—a circumstance to which, in part, they owe their exaggerated character. At Mary's accession Foxe went to Basle, where he remained almost up to the time of the queen's death; so that his narrative was the fruit of second-hand information, derived from rebels or fanatics, and elaborated by an imagination fraught with bigotry and hatred of the queen. Amongst his assertions, he alleges that Bishop Gardiner kept the Duke of Norfolk "waiting dinner for two hours, that he might have the pleasure of communicating to his guest the particulars of the manner in which Latimer and Ridley bore the tortures of the stake." This is but a trifling inaccuracy in Foxe, seeing that the Duke of Norfolk was dead more than a year before the execution of Latimer and Ridley. So much for this "fact." Harding, the contemporary of Foxe, has given very satisfactory proofs that in three important statements with respect to immolations at the stake, the martyrologist has put forth "deliberate falsehoods."

In one of Foxe's many relations of Dr. Bonner's cruelties he alleges that the bishop had "taken four Reformers home to his house for the purpose of a mock trial in his library; that they were there condemned to the flames as heretics, and at midnight a fire was kindled in a neighbouring field, at which the valiant servants of Christ were roasted; and they roared and screamed so loudly that the inmates of the cottages near were disturbed in their beds by the awfulness of what took place." Henry Griffin, a good authority as to the accuracy of this marvellous Foxite story, states that the

bishop did bring four persons home with him to investigate the charges against them, which he (Bonner) considered as trivial, but as the men made themselves obnoxious to the Papal party, he privately sent them to Holland the next day, at his own expense, and with the full concurrence of the four men themselves, one of whom, Henry Lee, was the son of Bishop Bonner's own tailor. The story about Isaac Jewell seems to be something like a myth. This man was reported to have been "made away with, body and bones," by Bonner. Well, as to the fact. This "hot-gospeller" was an expert mower, and in the employment of the Bishop; Henry Griffin relates that he "saw Bishop Bonner sitting upon the grass, whilst he discoursed with Jewell on the merits of wild honey—a thing Dr. Bonner was very fond of." And this occurred long after Jewell's alleged disappearance.

Sir James Mackintosh states that the majority of Papal bishops were opposed to the very persecution which is attributed to them by Foxe and his contemporaries. Maitland "believes that Dr. Gardiner has been misrepresented," and Dean Hook says, "When Gardiner was at the zenith of his power, fewer suffered for religious opinions than at any other period of Queen Mary's reign." So much for Master Foxe and his correspondents.

In vindication of Foxe it has been contended that he sometimes published "pious old women's tales," that "he was very credulous, and his zeal for the Reformation perhaps led his imagination astray." But Foxe was neither simple nor credulous, and his piety, as a Reformer, was more than

liable to question. When only fifteen years of age he showed a peculiar talent for lying, and he cultivated that talent in after life. When his patron, Archbishop Cranmer, heard any marvellous relation in which Foxe was given as an authority, he sometimes smiled, but, with his well-known caution, refrained from comment. Maunder, an ardent admirer of Foxe, nevertheless admits, of the "Book of Martyrs," that "there is scarcely any work in existence, perhaps, concerning which such opposite opinions have been entertained." This diversity is rapidly disappearing—in fact, amongst the intelligent, it has wholly ceased to exist. Parsons, who was almost a contemporary of Foxe, and Dr. Milner (the latter writing in this century), regard the martyrologist as a "fabricator of falsehoods." Those were Roman Catholic ecclesiastics—to be sure—one a distinguished convert, the other a learned and eminent divine and scholar. But their opinions have been endorsed by recent writers like Lord Macaulay, Dean Hook, Dr. Brewer, the calendarer of the "State Papers," &c. Dr. Hook, who cannot be regarded as a friend to the Papacy, but whose probity and respect for truth, ever the characteristic of a really learned and honourable man, inevitably lead him to express facts when he has discovered them, rejects Foxe as an authority, and justifies the rejection by quoting two "staunch Protestant" authorities. (Vol. i. new series, p. 148): "For the character of Foxe, I will refer not to a Roman Catholic, but to the scholar most competent, from his deep researches into the public records, to form an opinion upon the subject. 'Had the

martyrologist,' says Professor Brewer, 'been an honest man, his carelessness and credulity would have incapacitated him from being a trustworthy historian. Unfortunately, he was *not* honest. He tampered with the documents that came to his hand, and freely indulged in those very faults of suppression for which he condemned his opponents." And the learned Dean adds: "Some years ago I had occasion to consult the Rev. Dr. Maitland, the learned librarian of Lambeth, on the amount of credit I might give to a statement made by Foxe. His answer was, 'You may regard Foxe as being about as trustworthy as a certain newspaper.* You must not believe either when they speak of an opponent, for, though professing Protestantism, they are innocent of charity. You may accept the documents they print, but certainly not without collation. Foxe forgot, if he ever knew, who is the father of lies.'" Yet nearly all the circumstances and facts of Queen Mary's reign have been based upon Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," a book which has been printed by the million, and lately illustrated by Doré—beautiful, but false. Yet such has been the text-book of English historians, and, unhappily, English homesteads and schools. The learned Maitland has justly remarked, "That the matter of authorities is a very serious one." And, after commenting on the amount of valuable information the student of history will find in Strype's works on the Refor-

* Dr. Maitland and Dean Hook name the newspaper, but as this work is meant as a "veritable *Record*" of a momentous period and nothing more, it shall have no appearance of interfering in contemporary interests.

mation epoch, he continues: "But, at the same time, he who takes Strype for his authority without being aware of the honest spirit of prostrate 'hero-worship,' in which he wrote biography, and which seems to have rendered him incapable of estimating, or almost of considering, the genuineness, authenticity, or weight of documents on which he relied, or the character and authority of writers whom he quoted, will be sadly misled." Dean Hook, in alluding to some disreputable transactions in the career of Archbishop Cranmer, states that "there are documents in the archives of Canterbury cathedral which Strype must have seen, and left unnoticed in his work, for reasons best known to himself." The author of these pages has himself examined several MSS. with respect to Cranmer, which it is scarcely possible could have escaped the notice of a scholar of such immense industry as that generally displayed by Strype. His life of Parker, Grindall, Whitgift, and Aylmer, however interesting, have been fashioned after the policy which suggested the biography of Archbishop Cranmer. But, apart from sectarian bias, the University of Cambridge might well feel proud of Strype's learning and research.

With regard to Master Foxe, again it must be repeated, that if all the writers on the Reformation could possibly be now examined as to the authorities from whom they received their information, they would almost unanimously pronounce the name of Foxe. Therefore, let the reflecting reader of the present day ponder well the historic axiom of Dr. Maitland, "the matter of authorities is a very serious one."

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT IS THE CHARACTER OF BISHOP BURNET AS AN HISTORIAN?

In consequence of the dependence which has been so long placed upon Burnet by persons who have written what has been called history, the author of this work collates here from undeniable authorities—men of Burnet's own supposed belief—facts, statements and deductions which thoroughly manifest what degree of trust should be placed in him. Of his abilities, industry, and extensive knowledge, there can be no question. In private life, too, he was temperate, not personally immoral, and hospitable—qualities for which the Anglican clergy were not remarkable in his time. But to the question at issue. Burnet's "History of his Own Times" has been denounced by some of the ablest men of the last century as a "mass of questionable gossip." In every shape questionable—in the writer and in the statements. Swift, Arbuthnot, and Pope condemned it as a work of art, and estimated it at the very lowest value as a record. Dr. Johnson, who was wont to scan men and motives with the comprehensive eye of a philosopher, sarcastically remarked of Burnet, that "he was a man who set his watch by a certain clock, and did not care whether that clock were right or wrong." If this saying of the learned doctor be analysed with a little thought, the reader can limn

on the mental canvass a life-long portrait of Burnet. Horace Walpole, born and reared in the atmosphere of political intrigue and corruption, is the only man of literary note in the last age who writes approvingly of Burnet. He says of the narrative of his "Own Times": "It seems as if he had just come from the king's closet, or from the departments of the men whom he describes, and was telling his reader in plain honest terms of what he had seen and heard." In the mind of Walpole "honesty" was but a relative term; and his evidence is merely valuable as to the accuracy of Burnet's descriptions, not as to the correctness of his allegations. In "Pepy's Diary" (5 vols.) will be found many passages contradicting even this asserted accuracy; and the diaries and journals kept by several of Burnet's contemporaries—men, too, of his own tactics—are frequently at issue with most of the bishop's statements. Sir John Dalrymple, another high Protestant authority, in his memoirs says: "I have never tried Burnet's facts by the tests of dates and original papers without finding them wrong."—p. 34. Henry Wharton, in his "Specimens of Some Errors and Defects" (printed 1693), makes a most damaging attack upon the veracity of Burnet, but the veteran bookmaker and courtier took no notice—perhaps because the author, under the name of "Anthony Harmer," was undiscoverable. In that name, however, the contemporary slayer of Burnet's veracity is to be found in the British Museum, as is the original in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, to whose gifted and courteous librarian, Mr. Coxe, the literary world owe so

many thanks. Bevil Higgons's "Historical and Critical Remarks" put on Burnet's "History of his own Times" the seal of condemnation; but this fact is merely worth mentioning now on account of the carelessness with which some otherwise painstaking historians have, since then, adopted the statements of a most unworthy man. Philpot Curran, himself the son of a Protestant clergyman, once asked a lady who had embraced Protestantism her reasons for seceding from Rome. She replied, "Why, sir, because I had studied the works of such pious men as Foxe and Bishop Burnet." "Then, madame," said Curran, "you must be a red-hot Protestant, and believe far more than my notions of truth can comprehend."

As to Burnet's "History of the Reformation," the first part of which was published in 1681-2, it was printed for the market, for the political shambles whereat was to be slain the right undoubted of James Duke of York to the throne of his brother Charles. It was an improved supplement to the conspiracies of Messrs. Oates, Bedloe, and Dangerfield; and was successful from the fancied integrity of the writer, as well as from the singularity of its aptitude. When, to use a modern phrase, the "steam went down," quaint and flaring placards announced that a "few copies of 'Burnet's Reformation' were on hands," and the booksellers, subsidised, gladly parted with their copies to the traitors or fanatics who, being purchased in their turn, read them for the mindless multitude at St. Paul's Cross, in Smithfield, in the kens of suburban London, and

in the purlieus of ignorance and disaffection throughout the country. The second part of Burnet's "Reformation" was not published until thirty-three years after the first portion (1715). Heaven knows how many changes of thought passed in the interval—cloudlike, bright or dark—over a mind so ductile to circumstances! The second edition was issued in hot haste, after the disastrous effort of the first "Pretender," when the noblest families of the north of England were in mourning at the feet of still reeking gibbets, and manhood stood appalled at the spectacle of "law." The first edition was dedicated to Charles the Second, as the second was to George the First. Both publications are filled with vapid assertions of morality and public virtue, deductions of the writer's own mind as to what should decently appear to the public eye—and pay with its appearance. The characters of the two monarchs to which this bipartite legacy of historic falsehood was dedicated ought of itself to satisfy posterity as to the trustworthiness of Burnet. What was Charles the Second, what George the First? The author and the patrons were worthy of each other; and that fact is the sternest in the history of morality. It is rather strange to find an apologist for Burnet in Dr. Lingard, who states that William Thomas, author of "Il Pelerino Inglese," led Burnet "into a multitude of errors." Dr. Lingard seems not to have known that many of Burnet's best read contemporaries denied the accuracy of William Thomas as a historian, and Burnet was well aware of the disbelief entertained of his trustworthiness, for he advised with many

learned men as to the credibility of his authorities. In fact, Burnet wrote a book for a political object; and, like too many others, subordinated facts to faction.

The history of his own times—*not* written by himself—will provide the reader of Burnet with far more than sufficient evidence of his unfitness to write a trustworthy history of the Reformation or of any other epoch. After the many schemes concocted by the profligate ministry of Charles the Second to put away, or to do away with, the outraged and virtuous Queen Catherine of Braganza had failed, Dr. Burnet, then one of the royal chaplains—chaplain* to Charles and the harem!—Lady Castlemaine, the Protestant wife of a base Catholic the presiding sultana—won unpopularity, even from the rough people, by publishing two papers, or cases, in which he set forth the queen's barrenness as good cause for divorce. These "papers" affected to place the delicate question in a "religious point of view." They were designated "Solution of Conscience: one touching Polygamy, the other Divorce; and what Scripture allows in both Cases." Here the "chaplain" hesitated not to recur to matters which preceded the Mosaic dispensation; and sought to renew the tenets of a Hebrew economy which the gathering intelligence of the Jews had almost altogether eschewed before the coming of the

* What a contrast between Burnet, preaching before the bedizened harlots of Charles's court, without a single reference to their crimes, and Massillon, his great French contemporary, denouncing to the face of the court, in words of thunder, the profligacy of Louis XIV., his courtiers, and his courtezans!

Redeemer. "It is needless," writes Miss Strickland, with the natural indignation of a virtuous mind, "to comment on the base hypocrisy of affecting to search the Scripture for an excuse of vice. These polluted shafts were aimed at the innocent queen, at the suggestion, it is presumed, of Buckingham and Lauderdale. It was expected that they would have obtained the reward of a rich bishopric for the writer; but Charles despised both the adviser and the advice, and when Gilbert Burnet, some years subsequently, having joined the opponents of the court, in consequence of his being deprived of his office in the Chapel Royal, wrote a remonstrance to the king on his immoral way of life, Charles treated him with the most cutting contempt."—Miss Strickland's "Queens of England," 2nd edit., vol. v., p. 588.

If Satan had reproved Charles, the royal sinner might have accepted the reproof with civility. But the "Merrie Monarch" had chivalry enough to contemn the human foe of his spotless wife. Was it fits of remorse which rendered Burnet now and again amenable to the behests of moral sentiment? If so, he erred again. The old score had been hardly effaced, when the entire surface of his soul was recrusted with transgressions. Whilst from 1682 to 1688, he was urging on Mary, the unnatural daughter of James the Second, in conspiracy against the father, who, with blind affection, called her his "best beloved child"—whilst, at home and in Holland, Burnet worked darkly and effectively, inciting and confirming the English Tullia in her parricidal ambition, when the goal was won, and William and Mary were enthroned at

Whitehall, and the king and father was a fugitive —the new-made Bishop of Salisbury, who had slandered the fallen monarch in his sermon at the coronation of the daughter, had the unspeakable effrontery, in a few days after, to "admonish" Mary for the "indecent and unfeeling manner in which she had acted towards her father," declaring "that the people thought very ill of her for so doing." The power of hypocrisy could no further go. If Mary of Orange had one spark of filial virtue in her soul, one touch of nature in her heart, the one was quenched, the other stricken pulseless by the urgings and incitements of the very man who had the audacity to reprove a sin, in whose fruition he was now himself a secured participator. The reader who does not yet know what manner of man was Burnet, and is inclined to still believe in his honesty as a writer, may consult the documents in reference to Catherine of Braganza, published in the appendix to "Mackey's Court of Great Britain;" documents which Mackey, a personal friend of Burnet, and a witness to his will, states to be in Burnet's own handwriting. The documents are not to be found in Burnet's works, from which his son extruded them, doubtless on account of their character—so damaging, not to the reputation of his father, for that were impossible, but to the repute of the family. Or had the son suppressed, because the facile father had retracted, in obedience to the dicta of a higher power?

Sir Walter Scott, in his compilation, "The Life and Works of Dryden," has bequeathed the

following opinion of the versatile and astute bishop in his notes to "Glorious John's" nearly last work, "The Hind and the Panther." In the notes to vol. x. Sir Walter writes: "His (Burnet's) opinions were often hastily adopted, and of course sometimes awkwardly retracted, and his patrons were frequently changed. Thus he vindicated the legality of divorce for barrenness on the part of the wife, and even that of polygamy, in his solution of two important 'cases of conscience.' These were intended to pave the way for Charles divorcing his wife Catherine to enable him to marry another, and so raising a family to succeed him, instead of the Duke of York. These opinions Burnet formally retracted. Notwithstanding his zeal for liberty, his first work is said by Swift to have been written in defence of arbitrary power. Above all, his great intimacy with the Dukes of Hamilton and Lauderdale, the King and the Duke of York, the Pope (!) and the Prince of Orange; in short, his having the address to attach himself for a time to almost every leading character whom he had an opportunity of approaching, gives us room to suspect that if Burnet did not change his opinions, he had at least the art of disguising such as could not be accommodated to those of his immediate patrons. When the King (James) demanded that Burnet should be delivered up by the States, he threatened in return to justify himself by giving an account of the share he had in affairs for twenty years past; in which he intimated he might be driven to mention some particulars which would displease King James. This threat, as he had

enjoyed a considerable share of his confidence when Duke of York, may seem, in some degree, to justify Dryden's heavy charge against him, of availing himself of past confidence to criminate former patrons. It is remarkable also, that even while he was in the secret of all the intrigues of the Revolution, and must have considered it as a near attempt, he continued to assert the doctrine of passive obedience, and in his letter to Middleton, in vindication of his conduct against the charge of high treason, there is an affectation of excessive loyalty to the reigning monarch."

Sir Walter Scott cannot conclude without an effort to present a "silver lining" in the cloud which even then hung over the character of his countryman. He again remarks: "Against these instances of dissimulation, forced upon him perhaps by circumstances, but still unworthy and degrading, we may oppose many others, in which, when his principles and interest were placed at issue he refused to serve the latter at the expense of the former."

With all our recently received illumination we can perceive how more than difficult it is to ascertain what particular "sacrifice" Dr. Burnet ever made at the expense of "interest."

When the Commons, in 1675, had resolved to overthrow the power of the Duke of Lauderdale, they were aware that Burnet "was very much in his confidence," and could reveal many startling schemes of that nobleman. He was accordingly summoned to give evidence "against his patron." He modestly hesitated, but soon complied with the demand, "although he might have retired

from the kingdom for awhile to avoid doing so." In his defence of this transaction Dr. Burnet says: "I was much blamed for what I had done.....The thing had an ill appearance, as the disclosing of what had passed in confidence; though I make it a great question how far even that ought to bind a man when the designs are very wicked, and the person still continued in the same office and capacity of executing them."

Dr. Burnet's graceless, ungenerous, and studied misrepresentations and slanders upon the virtuous character of Mary of Modena met with the approval of few even of his patrons, save Mary of Orange and her sister. The evil daughters of James hated their gentle stepmother, who clung with sweet faith to the husband who might have been her father, whilst one daughter (Mary) expressed disappointment that her father had not been despatched as well as discrowned.

To return to Dr. Burnet. His conduct at the deathbed of King William elicited expressions of disgust from all present. He was kneeling by the royal patient's bed "praying and weeping" for the king; but the moment the physicians declared the vital spark had fled, he quickly rose, his tears suddenly disappeared, and entering a coach he drove in haste to offer homage to the "rising sun." Queen Anne, who was fond of royal etiquette and form, was indignant at his intrusion, "telling him to retire until the Lord Chancellor had saluted her as Queen."

Myriads of English-reading people imagine that Burnet was, as he has recently been designated,

"the good bishop," the "honest prelate," and would not credit that he wrote the infamous "Solution of Conscience," as well as the equally worthy "Reformation" and "History of My Own Times." Mackey, his friend, saw the copy of the first pamphlet in his handwriting; and the other works do as little honour to Burnet's veracity as the pamphlets redound to the credit of his manhood. Of the latter documents we take leave with Miss Strickland, a historian the most reliable, honourable, painstaking, and conscientious. After describing Burnet as a "notoriously false witness," Miss Strickland endorses Mackey's seal on these pamphlets: "There cannot be a doubt of their being genuine; and even his (Burnet's) peculiar style stamps them as his own, without any trouble of attestation."

Cardinal Vivian said of Henry II. of England, "Never did I see this man's equal in lying." Now, the Plantagenet lies were mostly the assumed necessities of contemporary statecraft; but Gilbert Burnet, in the almost sacred office of a historian, has committed a deep wrong upon posterity, by falsifying circumstances and misdescribing men and character. Any one whose curiosity may tempt him, will find on carefully examining the pages of Oldmixon, Rapin, and Hume, (first edition), that the authorities generally cited by those writers to prove shameful charges against the Papal party and the monastic houses, are Foxe and Burnet. Burnet is an especial favourite of David Hume's, although the philosophic historian occasionally considers him "mistaken as to his facts."

There is no truth, alas! so indisputable as that men are not to be judged by their writings; rather should the value of their writings be estimated by the quality of their actions. The author of a work, which created much sensation at the time, and which would have made him president of the Humane Society, had it existed at the period, "flung his sick and aged mother out of his house into the winter's snow;" and another writer preferred a puling lament over a dead ass to filial love for his only parent. Look at the actions of Burnet, and then weigh the worth of his allegations, the extent of his trustworthiness: the friend and enemy of the highminded Clarendon and his family—just as "fortune smiled or frowned upon them;" the "royal chaplin" who descended to accept presents from such women as Lady Castlemaine, the Duchess of Portsmouth, and Nell Gwynne; the political agent and spy of Shaftesbury, of Lauderdale, of Danby, of Buckingham, of Tennison; whilst at the same time "under personal obligations" to the Duke of York, and his confiding wife, Anne Hyde; the co-conspirator of the Prince of Orange and his wife, of the Princess Anne, and the treacherous Churchill; and, later still, the secret correspondent of Lord Sunderland, the basest of the base men of his age; surely a history of the Reformation by such a man cannot be received without grave suspicions of the motives which influenced its author. He had great interests to subserve, his own and others—how could a history in which politics and religion are so closely blended, written by such a man, be

unhesitatingly accepted? See the history—behold the man—a prelate the most time-serving that ever shamed a mitre—a man who, it could scarce be reckoned unfair to say, never performed an action without an interested motive, nor wrote a line without some indirect, if not proximate, regard to his never-forgotten self. Yet, on the foundation laid by this episcopal Mendez Pinto, one or more of our noted writers have raised their most brilliant historical structures—palaces of Aladdin, to vanish in a moment at the command of the Genius of Truth.

From the pages of this small book the reader can form some opinion of the veracity of the "Accusers and Defenders" of the monastic houses. The author, therefore, leaves the verdict in the hands of all who regard as virtues Honour and Integrity.

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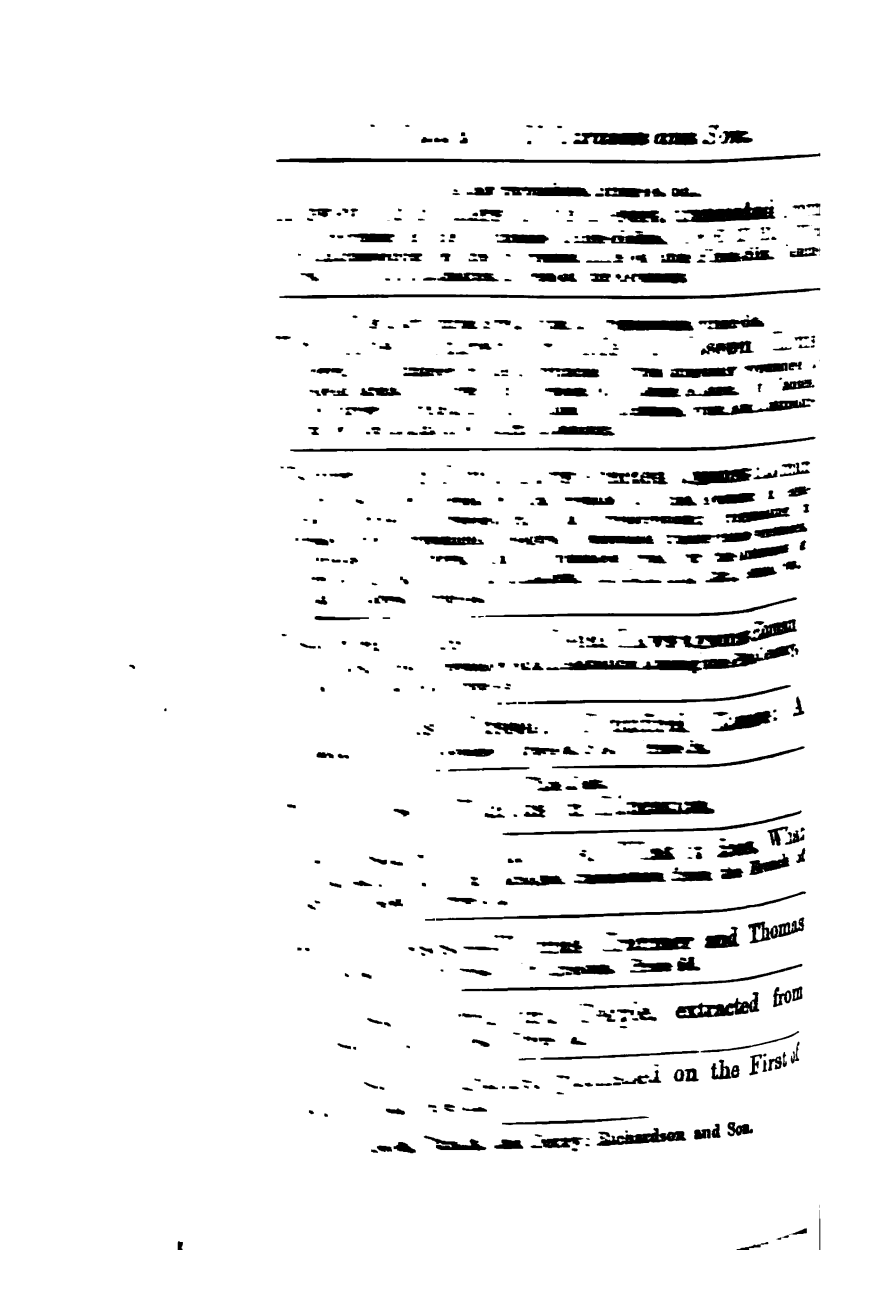

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